

Internet Acceptable Use Policy & Guidelines

The Internet is an enormous and complex combination of computer networks that connect with each other to share information. Governments, businesses, associations, schools, and individuals make information available to Internet users. Because it has so many contributors, the Internet and its available resources contain a wide variety of materials representing a range of views, some of them controversial.

The Roanoke County Public Library has no effective means for substantive control over the information accessed through the Internet and is not responsible for its content. Access points often change rapidly and unpredictably and not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. Users of the Internet, both in the Library and elsewhere, should exercise caution and critical judgment to thoughtfully evaluate the content they find on the Internet.

In keeping with the **Code of Virginia, 18.2-374.1:1**, content screening software has been installed on all public computer workstations. Along with this filtering software, public workstations reserved for juvenile users have limited search engines that restrict access to materials which may be harmful to children. Although these measures are in place, parents and legal guardians of children under the age of 18 are responsible for monitoring their children's use of the Internet and for deciding what Internet resources are appropriate for their children.

By using the public Internet workstations at the Roanoke County Public Libraries, you agree to the following:

The library is a public place and there are some Internet resources which may be inappropriate to a library setting. Both patrons and staff are prohibited from using Library equipment or connectivity for illegal purposes. Usage must consistent with the educational and informational purposes for which Internet access is provided.

Responsible use of the Internet includes:

- Using the Internet for educational or informational purposes only, and not for illegal or unethical purposes.
- Respecting the needs of other library users by limiting your time on Library computers to specified periods when others are waiting.
- Respecting the privacy of others using Roanoke County Public Library computers by not interfering with their use.
- Not sending, receiving, viewing, downloading, or displaying illegal materials and graphics which may reasonably be construed as obscene. The access and display of obscene graphics and child pornography is illegal (Code of Virginia, 18.2-372, 18.2-374.1). We urge careful consideration of the Internet sites you choose to view. The Library is a public place and other Library users may inadvertently be exposed to graphics displayed as a result of your search(es). Users also have an obligation to exercise control and restraint in regard to displaying materials which may be harmful to minors (Code of Virginia, 18.2-391.1), keeping in mind that children are frequent users of our libraries and are often pursuing schoolwork information in our reference and research areas of the Library.
- Not installing personal software on Library-owned computers and not making changes to the setup or configuration of Library-owned software or hardware including the adjustment or alteration of computer operating systems.

Roanoke County Public Library Does Not Provide:

- Downloading material from the Internet to any of the library computer hard drives. However, you may save information to a disk or print out material for a fee.
- Technical support for, or assistance with, chat capabilities.
- Unfiltered access on public workstations. Per the Code of Virginia, 18.2-374.1:1, content screening software has been installed on all public computer workstations. Staff members will assist persons who encounter difficulties in using these stations and are authorized by the Library Board and the Library administration to disable the technology protection measure at the request of the patron, in the instance of bona fide research or for other lawful purposes.
- E-mail accounts. You may access e-mail if you have an established account through a commercial provider or through an educational institution. However, you must know how to access that account from our public PC's. Please be aware that you may either lose information contained in e-mail or risk access to your e-mail by others using Library computers. Roanoke County Public Library cannot be held responsible for lost or accessed e-mail.

Staff Assistance:

Staff will be glad to assist you in accessing the Internet and we will provide you with our best efforts in finding the information you need.

The Library staff is committed to equitably administering the policies, guidelines, and procedures which govern Internet access for the public. Staff routinely monitor use of all library facilities and equipment, and is prepared to offer assistance and guidance when appropriate. Library patrons who observe possible violations of the Internet policy and guidelines are encouraged to report their concerns to the staff on duty. In addition, staff members are committed to following the guidelines as they conduct their work and they adhere to a strong set of professional and ethical standards.

An Important Reminder:

While the Internet can provide valuable information on some topics, it is not always the best place to find the information you are seeking. Have fun exploring the Internet - but please remember that you can often find the specific information you need elsewhere in the library, in our books, magazines, databases, etc.

Library Users' Responsibility:

By accessing the Internet at a Roanoke County Public Library, you agree to abide by the terms of this policy and its guidelines.

Failure to follow Library Internet policies, guidelines, or procedures can result in a loss of the user's access privileges. Illegal or disruptive behaviors can result in immediate termination of access and may necessarily involve intervention by law enforcement authorities. The Library reserves the right to terminate any Internet search session, and users who fail to follow the guidelines may indefinitely lose their access privileges, particularly in the case of repeat offenders. Users may appeal any termination of access privileges to the Library Director. Cases needing subsequent review may be taken to the Library Board.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Library Board and Director, October 1996; modified and revised in September, 1998; June, 1999; October, 2003; July, 2005; and September, 2007.